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Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE ACT— Resumed

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 8404, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 8404) to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Schumer (for Baldwin) amendment No. 6487, in the nature of a substitute.

Schumer amendment No. 6488 (to amendment No. 6487), to add an effective date.

Schumer amendment No. 6489 (to amendment No. 6488), to add an effective date.

Mr. LUJÁN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

H.R. 8404

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, for millions and millions of Americans, today is a very good day, an important day, a day that has been a long time coming: We are voting to pass the Respect for Marriage Act. Later this afternoon, with a little more bipartisan cooperation, the Senate will vote to pass the Respect for Marriage Act, putting it on the brink of reaching the President's desk.

In many ways, the story of America has been a difficult but inexorable march toward greater equality. Sometimes we have taken steps forward.

Other times, unfortunately, we have taken disturbing steps backward. But, today, after months of hard work, after many rounds of bipartisan talks, and after many doubts that we could even reach this point, we are taking a momentous step forward for greater justice for LGBTQ Americans.

Let me summarize how today will proceed. Later this afternoon, per an agreement between both parties, the Senate will hold three rollcall votes on amendments presented by Senators LEE, LANKFORD, and RUBIO. A vote on final passage for the Respect for Marriage Act will be held after that.

Standing here today, with the passage of this legislation, it is impossible not to think of my family. Today, I am wearing the tie I wore at my daughter's wedding, one of the happiest moments in my life. But I also cannot help but recall the harrowing conversation I had with her and her wife a little more than 2 years ago.

In September of 2020, I was in the middle of a family dinner when we received the news that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away. I remember that awful feeling around the dinner table, and I distinctly remember the question my daughter and her wife asked: "Could our right to marry be undone?"

Millions of Americans in same-sex marriages go about their day with this terrible question lurking in the back of their minds. It is scary. It is a scary, but necessary, acknowledgement that, despite all the progress we have made, the constitutional right to same-sex marriage is not even a decade old and exists only by the virtue of a very narrow 5-to-4 Supreme Court decision.

And we all know the Court has changed since that decision. As we have already seen this year, what the Court has decided in the past can be easily taken away in the future.

So today's vote is deeply personal for many of us in this Chamber. It is personal for me, of course. It is personal

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O God, in whom is calmness, peace, and harmony, thank You for flourishing faith and growing love. Keep us from dissension and bring us to the unity of Your power.

Lord, give us the grace to stay on the road of virtuous and godly living. Bring us into an ever deeper understanding of Your will. Give our Senators Your peace and an awareness of Your abiding presence. May they exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.

Lord, empower them to cling tightly to their faith in You and to keep their consciences clear. We trust in You and know that You will lead us by Your truth.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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